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"Every Iowan deserves access to quality health care from a doctor they trust," Braley said. "In order to make quality health care a reality, we need to ensure that Iowa's doctors have the resources they need to continue serving Iowa's families. I am proud that this legislation will increase Medicare reimbursement rates to Iowa's doctors, making Iowa a more attractive place for doctors to settle and practice."

Today's Medicare legislation would increase the minimum payment under the Geographic Practice Cost Index (GPCI), which Medicare uses to calculate regional reimbursements to physicians. Medicare considers the cost of business in Iowa and other rural states to be low, and this negatively impacts the amount that Iowa doctors are reimbursed for their services.

Last June, Braley introduced the Medicare Equity and Accessibility Act of 2007 (HR 2827), a bipartisan bill that would increase Medicare reimbursement rates for physicians in Iowa and other rural states. The legislation would put a permanent floor on Medicare reimbursement rates for doctors' services and practice expenses, above the current rates in Iowa.

The Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act would also eliminate a 10.6% doctor reimbursement cut, scheduled to take effect on July 1st and increase reimbursement rates by 1.1% for 2009.